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ABSTRACT

Given the opportunity to tell and write their own stories directly after hearing folk tales, 15 children, aged 7 to 10, used methods similar to those of professional adult writers to reshape 52 traditional tales. Three times, children retold the original tale; in 9 cases, they borrowed heavily from the original, retaining concrete details and situations; in 21 instances, children recreated the story, extracting a single element, such as a character type, from the source and placing it into their own context; in 10 stories, there was blending of the plot setting, story situation, or characters from several sources, such as other stories and television shows; 9 older children abstracted the major theme but transformed the other story elements until the original folk tale was no longer recognizable. As older children produced more blendings and transformations while the younger ones relied more on borrowings and recreations, maturation appears to play an important part in children's reshaping of literature. Children seem to move gradually from borrowing and recreating to blending and transforming. Blending appears to be a bridge between reliance on an author's ideas and greater independence in the creative process. All children, however, appear to find intricate ways to fuse traditional literary elements with material from their own experiences. (MM)

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PATTERNS OF STORY DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

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PATTERNS OF STORY DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO LITERATURE*

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Interest in the storymaking process of children has been gaining the increased attention of researchers in the past several decades. In 1963, for example, Evelyn Pitcher and Ernst Prelinger collected children's stories in order to explore the emotional development of two to five year olds.[1] In the next decade, Arthur Applebee utilized the Pitcher-Prelinger collection in attempting to determine what expectations children have about stories.[2] More recently, Brian Sutton-Smith collected fantasy narratives of children two to ten years of age in an effort to establish that even the earliest children's stories have a distinct cognitive structure paralleling their expressions in other artistic modes.[3]

As Diana Kelly-Byrne notes, however, less attention has been paid to "children's original texts as vital parts of the field of children's literature."[4] Observing children hearing stories and then creating literature-based stories in their play has lead her to call for further investigation in how children "borrow" from fiction in both formal and informal situations; how, in short, they learn to "negotiate" the "institution of literature."[5]

That children are influenced by what they read is a widely accepted premise of nearly every culture. Without this belief, societies would never become involved in the perils of censorship. Yet how children process literature in their own storymaking efforts--how they interpret, assimilate, synthesize, and later reproduce literary plots, themes, forms, settings, characters, and motifs in their own stories--seems less clear.

Jane Yolen speaks of the child's "landscape" being broadened, deepened, and transmuted with the first story heard, just as traditional folk tales have

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themselves undergone continual change and "shapeshifting" by professional storytellers, nursery maids, writer/recorders, such as the Brothers Grimm and authors of literary fairy tales.[6] Yet what does this "transmutation" really involve? If, for example, children were given the opportunity to write or tell stories directly after hearing a particular story or group of stories, what might we see? Would they merely retell or summarize the stories they heard? Or would they write entirely new stories, either seemingly unconnected with what they heard or so subtly connected that the reader scarcely recognizes the influences, i.e. the symbols, motifs, tone, or mood of the original story or the parallel themes, character types, or organizational structures?

We might assume that each of these situations could occur, but that other situations might arise also. For example, as children progress in age, their stories become longer and more complex, Applebee previously noted, with characters, actions, and settings becoming further removed from familiar experiences, and favorite storybook or television characters assuming more important roles in the stories.[7] Thus we could assume that children might rely in their stories upon an author's plot, at the same time creating their own characters, setting, or dialogue. Some independence would be at work here, but it might not be highly developed. Or children might rely on an author's plot, setting, character type, or theme, yet create an entirely new focus, emphasis; or they might develop further some literary element. Thus they would be reshaping an original plot to <u>accommodate</u> their own ideas, rather than relying upon a ready made plot to <u>supply</u> their ideas.

One special type of "reshaped" or "recycled" story could arise if the child's personal experiences with television, movies, family life, peer friendships, and daily activities provided the focus or emphasis for a story in which some traditional literary element were noticably present. A child might

hear a story about elves, for example, and write a story about elves meeting Batman or playing football. The "recycled" material would involve more than what a child had read, yet the connecting link would be the literary motif of elves.

What kinds of stories, then, can we assume that most children will usually write after an exposure to literature--retellings, entirely new stories, stories of heavily modeled effects, or stories which re-create certain literary effects in more subtle ways. And how will children respond to the "matter" of a genre such as folk literature, to the settings, character types, motifs, and archetypal themes and plot patterns of flight and pursuit, loss and return, quest adventure, and the clash of good and evil. Will they ignore such elements? Incorporate them into their own narratives? Fuse the matter of other cultures with their own personal experiences?

To explore tentatively these questions, stories were collected from fifteen Greenville, North Carolina children, ages 7 to 10 years, who met regularly over a three month period to listen to folk tales told or read and then to tell or write their own stories after they discussed the stories. An analysis of those stories in which some connection to literature, however subtle, was noted (52), revealed that the stories could be placed in five categories according to the extent of reliance upon and degree of influence by literary materials and could also be correlated with those methods which professional adult writers use to produce reshapings of traditional folk tales for children: retellings, borrowings, blendings, re-creations, and transformations.

Professional writers for children often "retell" traditional folk tales in the same way a copyist reproduces a painting, yet a certain amount of interpretive reshaping usually occurs, at the very least, in the illustrations of such books. Alan Garner's term "adaption" describes the adult writer's conscious intent in producing a retelling. With adaption, according to Garner, one limits

oneself to the least possible interference with the original text (small additions or deletions only).[8]

Tiffiny, age 7, also is "adapting" (with less conscious intent) when, after hearing the Norse myth "Sif's Golden Hair,"[9] she tells (or retells) a story:

> Once there was a girl named Sif. She had long beautiful golden hair and one night somebody sneaked into her room and cut all her hair off. And her father told the gnomes to fix her some more hair and grow it on her head. And they did. And then he told them to make a ship. And they made a spear and they made an arm ring and they made a thunderbolt . . .

Tiffiny "processes" the details of the story with little deviation from the original, except that she replaces, or exchanges, the word "husband" with that of "father," a result, perhaps, of seeing Sif, like herself, as a girl rather than as a woman. In the Greenville story collection, only three close retellings occured and then only among the youngest children, the seven year olds.

Garner speaks of two other modes of retelling a folk tale: free adaptation and transposition. In the first, professional writers change details of the plot or include episodes from parallel plots. With the second, when a good idea arises within what they feel to be a less appealing setting or situation, they create a new version, as when Raymond Briggs produces a modern witty version of"Jack and the Beanstalk" in Jim and the Beanstalk.[10] Something similar to both modes occurs in children's stories when a child relies on or "borrows" basic elements of a story--a plot or plot pattern, a traditional character, or a theme--but produces a different focus or emphasis from the original story.

After hearing Outside Over There,[11] for example, Tiffiny produced "The Magic Horn," in which she retained from Sendak's story the motif of a magical musical instrument (the horn), the house-forest, cave setting, the goblin characters, and the image of goblin "babies" surrounded by broken egg shells. But she also readjusts the focus of the earlier story, from a child pursuing goblin kidnappers to a search for a stolen horn:

Once I had a horn. It was a magic horn. I blew it and I blew it out the window and flowers grew all around the window. And after I blew my horn every day I washed it and put it back in the closet but one time I went down in the forest to blow it and there was a cave. I went inside the cave and there was a band of goblins dancing. I saw them and I heard them talking. And after that I went home and put my horn up and the next morning the goblins came and stole my horn. So I went down to the goblin's cave and saw the goblins weren't in it. But I saw my horn and it was all scratched up and torn. And I blew it but it wasn't magic. So I found a spear and went to the goblin's cave. Then I killed all of them one by one. The next morning I went back down to the goblin's cave and the babies were sitting in the goblin's cave. I wondered where they came from but from the eggshells beside them, I knew they came out of the eggshells. And they went down beside the stream and fell in the water and vanished.

Similarly Peter, age 8, maintains Sendak's plot and even many of his phrasings but changes the setting to a military base with Russians replacing goblins and kidnapping the scout, so that Private Star must "snatch his war-suit," "tuck his gun in his pocket" and go whirling by the Russian bases (just as Sendak's Ida, with her magic horn went floating over the goblin caves in pursuit of her kidnapped baby sister).

Although with borrowings such as these reliance is heavy on original story elements, the child still usually exhibits a firm comprehension of the original story elements. Both Tiffiny and Peter have internalized Sendak's theme of loss and recovery, flight and pursuit, and clash of good and evil, but they still rely upon concrete items and situations of the original work, rather than transferring an abstracted theme to a new situation. Younger children seem to produce more borrowings than older ones (seven in the category of 7 to 8 year olds, compared to two in the category of 9 to 10 year olds), conceivably because borrowing is really only a step away from retelling in independent creation.

In a third category of stories, children move beyond borrowing heavily from one literary source to borrowing from or integrating several areas of experience, including usually at least one more easily recognizable literary experience and often many less recognizable sources, depending upon the extent of the child's

reading background. (When children are sharing their own created stories, these readily become part of the "literary" corpus and often the most popular influences.) "Blendings" combine characters or character types familiar to children from one story with the plot of another story, in the same way that an adult writer such as Mercer Mayer grafts the frog character of Grimm's "The Frog Prince" onto the Norwegian tale "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," in his picturebook version of the same title.[12]

Also with blendings, the plot, setting, and story situation often include recognizable characters of the popular culture (television, movies, and toys) just as Mayer's picturebook includes suggestions of Star Wars characters and situations mixed with costumes and settings of Grimm country. Children hearing folk tales about dwarfs and gnomes often blend folk tale characters with plots and characters of Smurf cartoons. Angela, age 9, creates a new character, a "trol smurf" (an "ugly smurf," she says). Angel, also 9, tells of Kim and Kristy Troll kidnapping Smurfette, Greedy, and Clumsy Smurf. And Laura, after exposure to D'Aulaire's The Terrible Troll-Bird,[13] injects a troll-bird character into her story cast of Strawberry Shortcake figures (familiar to her through dolls and mass market books):

> Once in the land of Strawberry Shortcake, the Purple Pieman decided to get a pet. So he decided to get a big giant bird. All the people of Strawberry Land were afraid of that. And then the Purple Pieman came down the mountain and said, 'Give me all your berries or my troll-bird will eat you up . . .'

More blendings were produced by older than younger children (seven out of ten), a result perhaps of the greater complexity of integrating plots, characters, and settings of several sources.

The fourth category of stories, "re-creations," reversed this ratio. In this, the largest category of stories (21), in which children extract only a single element from a literary source, usually a character type, and place this character into their own milieu of personal experiences, 13 were produced by younger children and 8 by older ones.

Both children and professional writers at times place traditional folk character types in situations based on the personal experiences of modern children rather than in traditional settings. Tove Jansson, for example, has created imaginary extensions of the friendly trolls of Swedish folklore, with fantasy creatures, called Moomintrolls, whose familiar childlike predicaments and family settings were first depicted in Moominsummer Madness.[14] But the only connection between these characters and traditional Swedish trolls are that they are small, harmless, imaginary creatures. Similarly Mark, age 7, depicts dwarfs and gnomes playing baseball and riding motorcycles, with little else than size distinguishing them from any other character type.

Most stories of this "re-creation" category were similar to "The Elves Bred Dinner" by Lisa, age 7, after exposure to Outside Over There and Grimm's "The Elves," in The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales[15]:

> One day I saw some elves. I watched them. They went in a tunnel. We saw them eat bred. They ate slowly. They came back out. We went in. We came out. They went in. They watched TV. Then they came back out. We went in and the bred was gone.

Here the familiar elf character appears in a semi-traditional setting (a tunnel) and participates in situations the child herself has experienced (watching television and eating bread), but the elves have none of the traditional literary traits that one sees in "The Dance of the Elves," by Laura, age 9, where elves scheme, chant, dance, and prepare to harm children, just as Laura has observed elves doing in Sendak's Outside Over There and Grimm's "The Elves." Also the speaker or protagonist of Laura's story assumes responsibility for saving someone (just as Sendak's Ida did), and although her solution of suffocating the elves with plastic is more modern than enchanting them with a magic horn (Sendak's more traditional resolution), Laura can be seen as having abstracted the major theme of Sendak's story:

One day when I was walking, I saw a little elf run into a little hole. I wondered what it was all about. So I peeped in. Little elves were dancing around a fire singing:

We ve ne see. Coo coo tra la la. Fee fee coo loo loo cy.
We see ve ne a. All too troo tra. Ne otte wa we to nee.
Yay for the Elves!

I didn't know what that meant. Somebody said it in English though.
We hate people, people hate us too. We aren't very nice to know.
Nobody knows that we are mean.

I almost asked what kind of skiem, but somebody held up a chart that read:

Place: on the earth Who: Earthlings
Time: Tomorrow at 10:00 p. m. Skiem: Kill all the children.

Oh! Oh! I am a child. I knew I must stop them somehow. I heard once that you can kill an elf by shutting them in. I pulled out some plastic and put it over the hole. Then I put a rock over it. Whew! That was the end of the elves!

In "transformation" stories like Laura's, children reproduce themes they have abstracted from literature, although with new characters or familiar character types in new plots. Thus the scaffolding of an old story is present but elements have been recycled in such a way that the original story is no longer recognizable and an entirely new product is created, similar to the artist's original painting and the fantasy literature of adult writers. Outside Over There, for example, is an entity all its own, even though Sendak was inspired by Grimm's "The Elves" to create a situation involving a kidnapped baby, a changeling child, and goblin characters.[16] From the total corpus of stories, nine transformations were produced, none of which were told or written by a child below age 9, indicating that the tendency for children to abstract story theme at a later age[17] similarly determines their ability (or inability) to produce a story of transformation.

After hearing Outside Over There, for example, one of the younger children, Mark, produced two stories: "Me and the Goblins," a combination "borrowing/re-creation," in which he is captured by the goblins:

I was at the store and I runned back home and nobody was there, and a big goblin came and got me. They took me into a big cave. And then I was trapped. They started breaking the shells and they grew smaller and smaller and smaller and turned into babies. And I had a fun time. I put me on a little goblin suit and then I captured a lot of babies. I found one just right for me. It was my friend, Maurice. And we had a fun time.

and "The Adventures of Baby Chubber," which seems on the surface to be a transformation:

> Baby Chubber started out a small little chubby baby. He was fat. His brother got stolen and he went out to find him. He was three and the other little brother was one. Over the seas and over the bright sunlight Baby Chubber went. He bumped into a big rock and he met another person. The other person was Boo Boo. And Boo Boo and him looked for his little brother. He ran and ran and ran, Baby Chubber did. And Boo Boo did too. And they found him. But they didn't know how to get him out. That night at 12:00 they put a rope down the little hole and got Baby Chubby out. Over the seas and over the bright sunlight they went. When they got back home, they had a big celebration with Chubber, Boo Boo, and Chubby.

Although in the second story, Mark is relying upon (borrowing) his plot and characters from the Sendak story (an older sibling searching for a kidnapped younger sibling), his theme of search and rescue appears to have been abstracted in order to produce a new story. He has discarded all folk trappings of Sendak's story: the goblins and eggshells of Sendak's illustrations are no longer present, and now not one but both siblings are babies. Yet the story cannot stand alone, totally released from Sendak's story, as a transformation should. Who stole Baby Chubby? Where was he when they found him? Mark does not supply the answers because he is still relying on Sendak's story for his narrative framework, and thus it can only be understood from the first story that goblins stole the baby and the baby is now trapped in their cave.

Yet borrowing serves a useful purpose for Mark's development as a writer here. In the second story, he has moved beyond vicarious thrills and "let's pretend" games (often a major factor in children's re-creations) to dramatizing a theme of loss and recovery. He has moved, in other words, from what Applebee calls a "focused chain"[18] story, in which episodes are linked one to another primarily by time and space and linked to a common center (usually the narrator or speaker), into "narrative," in which a theme or conflict forms the center of the story. And the alliterative and characterizing names, Boo Boo, Baby Chubby, and Chubber, plus the description "Over the seas and over the bright sunlight" which reflects the word "over" of Sendak's title and the general rhythm of the text, also reveal that Sendak's story is helping to shape Mark's ideas and his

language as he reshapes the story.

Very different, on the other hand, is the response of Hugh, age 10, to the same story. "If I could be in the story," Hugh said, "I'd be a boy and make it different. I would fly." The result is "The Boy and the Bird," in which all concrete details of Sendak's story--the machinery of "little people," the forest-cave setting, the sibiling characters, and the ending of recovery and celebration--are erased. The only influences remaining are the genre of fantasy, the plot pattern of flight and pursuit, the theme of familial responsibility (father for son replacing sister for sister), and the motif of flying. And this time the story does stand alone:

> Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there lived a boy. He was very happy. He played with his friends and he had a dog. Now this dog called birds. And one day the dog was calling birds and this great bird came down. And the boy was just walking out of the house. So this great big bird came down and swooped him up into the sky. And then the father who had just found out about it started running to find the bird. When he found the bird, he just chased and chased but he could not catch up with the bird. So a few hours later, the bird stopped at his nest. When he did, the man started climbing up the mountains where the nest was very high in the Andes Mountains. So after he had climbed up there, the bird was gone. And he looked over into the sunset and the bird was heading West. So he ran and ran West. And he kept running toward the sun. And he just kept running trying to find the bird. And that is what makes the world go round.

The importance of categorizing children's storytelling responses to literature lies not only in focusing upon the extent of children's reliance upon literary materials but also upon what this reshaping process itself reveals about the child's evolving creative imagination and literary powers. This complex process can be seen evolving in a story Vinny, age 9.5 years, produced near the end of the study.

After hearing The Terrible Troll-Bird, he listened to a Swedish story about trolls, John Bauer's In the Troll Wood,[19] followed by two tales from South China, "The Fox Turns a Somersault" and "The Magic Pancakes at the Footbridge Tavern," in Lotta Hume's Favorite Children's Stories from China and Tibet.[20] Learning from the first Chinese tale that the fox was a companion to the fairy creatures

in Chinese stories and a magical animal that culd assume human shape, and from the second, that out of a tiny magic box under the ground, an innkeeper could bring tiny wooden figures to life, seemed to give Vinny additional ideas. His story "Mr. Yamaguchi and the Troll" is about a lonely man similar to the character of the Chinese tale, but the man's companion is a troll rather than the fox of the original story. Also after viewing the illustrations of the small wooden figures in the second Chinese tale, Vinny decided to add one of his own favorite game-toys to the plot: Dungeon and Dragon figures.

From the first Chinese tale he retains the general theme of helpfulness, but he discards the idea of shape-shifting: his troll is from beginning to end a troll and a good troll at that. Thus he seems to be remembering the Swedish rather than the Norwegian troll (Bauer's Brother Martin having explained that trolls were sometimes mischievous but his own small troll friend tidied his forest cottage, shared a bowl of porridge with the cat and even shared the bed with him and the cat).

Vinny's troll appears one night to take up residence with Mr. Yamaguchi, to "sleep in a little bed beside the cat's little bed," and to clean and cook for Mr. Yamaguchi who is lonely with "no wife or kids." And similar to the poor countryman who in the end kept the fox (transformed at last to its rightful form as a woman) as his wife, Mr. Yamaguchi in the end invites the troll to share his home, but for a different reason:

> . . .That night Mr. Yamaguchi did not go to bed. He hid behind the closet again and the little man jumped into the house getting ready to fix breakfast for him. And Mr. Yamaguchi jumped out and grabbed the little man by the arm and said, 'Hello. So you're the one who's been doing all this. I want you to stay with me. That way I'll have somebody to talk to. And we can sell things together and make lots of money. That way we can live in a better place." So the little troll said, 'ok.' So after that they sold gold and silver. They had a little business called Yamaguchi and Son. They they got enough money to buy a mansion in Town Square in Tokeyo and the little troll always hid in the closet when Mr. Yamaguchi had company and each night the little troll would fix supper and they would eat together. The cat ate too. Then they would all go for a walk in the forest. And then one night the little man said, 'since you've been so nice to me, I'll show you a little cottage, a little hole

> that's underneath the ground and I keep all kinds of little people that I make out of tin foil and metal there. And I call them dungeons and dragon people. So now we can make up a game.' So they made up a game called Dungeons and Dragons and that's how Dungeons and Dragons was invented.

Vinny's story is important for illustrating how the category of transformation subsumes all other categories. Basic elements of other stories--lonely man, mysterious helper, small figures from under the ground, theme of friendship--are present but in a re-focused state (borrowing). A familiar character type, the troll, appears in a new setting and situation (re-creation) butin a plot familiar to the child (blending). Taken together, these literary reverberations provide the rich texture of an entirely new story (transformation).

Vinny can be seen engaged in the human activity Simon Lesser describes as "analogizing," an unconscious participation in literature whereby new stories are structured upon stories or parts of stories read. According to Lesser, the process of analogizing gives us the "opportunity to relive or alter our actual experience or act out dramas revolving around our wishes and fears,"[21] for it arises from the impulse of "play," in which we act out "in sublimated and truncated fashion the roles and events which interest us."[22]

To the extent that one experiences imaginatively an entire story, acting out every role (depending upon how intense the literary or visual experience has been for the particular individual), this analogizing process could occur as the complete retelling of a story. However, because the child, as well as the adult, does not experience every aspect of every story with the same degree of interest or intensity, activities of borrowing, re-creating, and later blending come into play, as the child focuses upon different elements according to individual needs and preferences. Finally transformation occurs when the child experiences what Norman Holland describes as a "press toward theme and meaning . . .analogous to sublimation or symbolization in everyday life,"[23] and he or she synthesizes a piece of literature, experiencing it as a "transformation within himself of unconscious fantasy materials."[24]

Conclusions

It would appear that when given the opportunity to tell and write stories directly after hearing stories, children ages seven and above do not merely retell stories. Neither do they always create entirely new stories. In this particular study, involving a total of 52 literature-based stories, retellings occurred 3 times, each time with one of the younger children; borrowings occurred in 9 cases, 7 of these with younger children; re-creations occurred 21 times, with the majority of these by younger children (13); blendings occurred in 10 stories, the majority of these by older children (7); and transformations occurred in 9 cases, all by older children.

Because older children produce more blendings and transformations and younger children produce more borrowings and re-creations, it appears clear that maturation plays a part in children's reshaping of literature. Yet children do not seem to move in lockstep patterns from one category to another. (Tiffiny's borrowing--"The Magic Horn"--appeared before she heard "Sif's Golden Hair" and produced a close retelling of it; and Vinny, after creating the character of Mr. Yamaguchi in a transformation story, produced "Mr. Yamaguchi and the Smurfs," a blending in which the Japanese character is placed among the characters and situations of a cartoon setting.) Instead children seem to move gradually from the categories of borrowing and re-creating to blending and transforming (borrowings, re-creations, and blendings appearing to be for some an intermediate bridge between reliance on an author's ideas and greater independence in the creative process).

As to how children respond to the "matter" of folk literature, it is clear that children do utilize literary motifs in their own stories. They also

discover intricate ways to fuse traditional literary elements with the "matter" of their own experiences, and here also one finds certain factors related to maturity. Older children produced stories in which there was a greater tendency to endow fantasy creatures of other cultures with consistency of literary traits; they also produced fantasy creatures in new but characteristic roles. Both younger and older children introduced elements of personal experiences: toys, pets, activities such as bike and motorcycle riding, dancing, eating, playing ball, swimming, as well as the more violent episodes they had witnessed in movies, television shows, and news reports--bombings, stabbings, killings, and warfare;[25] but younger children utilized more of these personal experiences than literary experiences in their stories.

Motifs of literature that children did tend to incorporate most frequently included character types such as gnomes, hobbits, wizards, trolls, dwarfs, dragons, troll-birds, and fairy birds; settings such as forests, dungeons, caves, and castles;[26] and themes such as loss and return, the quest journey, the weak and the small outwitting the strong, and little people helping humanity or doing battle to save towns, castles, or royalty from monsters. They did not incorporate the motif of transformation present in several stories that they heard.

Because much can be observed about the child's creative processing of literature when children tell stories after hearing them, further investigations should not be overlooked. We might ask, for example, if exposure to a particular literary genre determines whether or not a child will compose in this genre? (Does hearing realistic fiction stimulate writing realistic fiction, the way hearing folktales seemed to elicit the writing of fantasy narrative here?) Or concerning Kelly-Byrne's suggestion, that children's created stories be treated as a vital part of children's literature, we might attempt to discover what kinds of stories children compose after exposure to one another's stories and which reshaping categories they then use.

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[16]Selma Lanes, The Art of Maurice Sendak (New York: Abrams, 1980), p. 228.

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[18]Applebee, pp. 64-66.

[19](New York: Methuen, 1979).

[20](Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1962).

[21]Fiction and the Unconscious (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1957), p. 200.

[22]Lesser, p. 254.

[23]Five Readers Reading (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 16.

[24]Holland, p. 19.

[25]Younger girls portrayed less aggressive behavior than boys generally (two stories of moderate aggression by girls compared to eleven stories of strong aggression by boys), supporting the findings of Donald Graves, "Sex Differences in Children's Writing," Language Arts 50 (October, 1973), pp. 1101-1106, that girls de-emphasized aggressive behavior or even highly active behavior in the stories they told.

[26]Girls' stories were set more often in those areas Graves calls the "primary territory" of home and family, boys having written more often about the community and the areas beyond it (22 stories of extended territory by boys compared to 6 stories by girls), younger girls, according to Graves, lacking exposure to the broader world and the changing roles of women that they need in order to write about it.